

A Review of the Last Lok Sabha Poll

At the poll, there has been a rout of the Congress. The poll testifies to the correctness of the reading of the political situation in our country by our great departed leader and teacher, the great Marxist genius of the era, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. After the Emergency was promulgated, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh alerted that the apparent silence that was prevailing within the country should not be interpreted as peoples' acceptance of or support to the burial of democracy perpetrated by the Congress Party under the leadership of Sm. Indira Gandhi. He also said time and again that if the left and democratic parties, realising their prime role could come forward to provide a correct leadership to the masses, then the anger of the masses could well be channelised to a really militant left and democratic mass movement, a precursor to the anti-capitalist mass movement. But if the left parties do not respond to this need and fail to provide leadership to the masses and thereby miss the opportunity of developing a militant left and democratic mass movement then the bourgeoisie who are always interested to obstruct the development of legitimate democratic mass movements would surely take that opportunity and channelise this mood of the people to polls. But even in that case people's anger was bound to burst forth and exactly this has happened this time. In the absence of any such movement being organised by the left and democratic forces, the poll gave the people the first opportunity and they gave a good drubbing to the Congress Party and to its leader Sm. Indira Gandhi.

The defeat of the Congress at the recent poll is a significant event. But the credit of defeating the Congress does not devolve on any particular party or individual. During the last thirty years of Congress misrule at the centre, the common people crushed and oppressed by the capitalist exploitative system, time and again burst out in anger and fought heroic battles. On each and every occasion these movements were most brutally suppressed by the Congress Government which aggravated the resentment of the people more and more. The movement of Gujrat, Bihar and the Railway Strike added fuel to the fire. And above all, all the measures adopted during the nineteen month's Emergency by which the Congress Party under the leadership of Sm. Indira Gandhi was trying to install a constitutional dictatorship in the country and foist its most oppressive rule surpassed all previous records of tyranny let loose on the people.

All these have helped to accumulate a tremendous hatred against Congress and have prepared the ground for the defeat of the Congress.

But the aspiration of the people could get a proper direction, could meet its logical culmination, had there been an alternative left and democratic front to guide and lead these struggles.

Our party, SUCI, the party of the Indian proletariat under the leadership of our great departed leader Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, untiringly attempted for the formation of the left and democratic front and again and again it has been frustrated and foiled by the opportunistic role of the two social democratic parties—the CPI and the CPI(M). It is highly regrettable indeed.

A change was desired by the people. A change has taken place. The cardinal question among others that deserves careful examination is, what is the character of this

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CENTRAL COMMITTEE STATEMENT

SUCI CALLS FOR UNITED LEFT AND DEMOCRATIC FRONT

The three-day session of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Centre of India was concluded on 6th April, '77 in Calcutta.

The Central Committee congratulated the people for routing the most autocratic regime of the Congress headed by Sm. Indira Gandhi from the centre at the poll.

In its long resolution the Central Committee *inter alia* stated:—

"The ruling Congress headed by Sm. Indira Gandhi during its tenure of ten years or so represented the aggregate interests of monopoly capitalism in India and served best the class interest of the ruling bourgeoisie. In its vain attempt to come out of the acute crisis of Indian capitalism accumulated during the last thirty years of Congress misrule which is but inevitable in the present era of the third phase of intense general crisis of world capitalism and being faced with the crisis of leadership inside the ruling party that cropped up, particularly after the verdict of the Allahabad High Court, Sm. Indira Gandhi and her party, the ruling Congress, created an unprecedented suffocating situation by the imposition of Internal Emergency and taking

away even the minimum democratic rights so long enjoyed by the common people of our country. Arrests of thousands of opposition leaders and workers including Comrade Sankar Singh, a member of the Central Committee of our Party and the Secretary of Bihar State Committee and a contingent of SUCI leaders and workers, issuing similar warrants of arrests against thousand others, amending the Constitution of India unabashedly only to suit the interest of the ruling Congress and the autocratic rule of the persons in power and last but not the least, putting the entire burden of the crisis on to the shoulders of the toiling millions for which not only great discontent but also tremendous anger, wrath and hatred had been formed in the minds of the people. All these only showed that Sm. Gandhi's government became

completely isolated from the people and no further hoodwinking the people by so-called radical slogans had been possible, and that it had only the coercive apparatus of the State to depend upon.

"Apprehending a serious outburst of deep anti-Congress hatred and resentment of the people the Indian monopolists, at least the majority of them, with a view to channelising this anti-Congress sentiment of the people in favour of a new alternative of their own class, in their bid to ultimately save capitalism not only from the wrath of the masses and to stem the tide of growing potential militant left and revolutionary mass movement, thought it fit to discard the Indira Gandhi leadership and to pose a second party as the "National alternative." This becomes amply clear when viewed from the perspective of how the Janata Party was formed, which so long proved abortive despite serious attempts by Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, within fortyeight hours of

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The 29th Anniversary of our beloved Party, SUCI, founded by the great proletarian leader, thinker and guide COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH is being observed throughout the Country in a most befitting and solemn manner.

People's hatred against Congress misrule was exploited by the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties to parliamentary reformism

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change and how far the people were going to be benefitted by this change? The other questions that need closer examination are: what is the nature and character of this widespread anti-Congress sentiment of the people? What is the real political implication and significance of the emergence of bourgeois alternative and the "two-party democracy" in our country, particularly in view of the inevitable attempt to confine the legitimate democratic movements of the people within the narrow bounds of bourgeois parliamentarianism?

What is the future of left politics in so far as the task of building up left and democratic alternative to bourgeois party or parties, particularly in the light of the role of the parties like the CPI and the CPI(M), is concerned?

And finally, what should be the proper role of the party of the proletariat and the oppressed people in order to defend and guard left politics and the banner of the working class movement in our country today?

In the present study, we would like to integrate all these cardinal and very urgent political questions in order to provide the people with a scientific approach with which they can read the situation in the correct perspective.

The defeat of the Congress does not by itself mean an automatic advancement of left politics, though, undoubtedly, there was a deep anti-Congress feeling and hatred among the people. We are to remember that this anti-Congress hatred of the masses, at the present stage of democratic movement, is not based on the realisation of the bourgeois class character of the Congress Party, other opposition parliamentary parties, the Government, the state and the society. Consequently, this hatred at the

present stage of democratic movement cannot be a conscious class hatred organised under the leadership of the party of their own—the real revolutionary working class party.

But the very fact of the existence and development of anti-Congress hatred today, on such a gigantic magnitude and dimension, though unconscious, carries within it all the ingredients of class hatred. This is very significant. Because, in the present stage of democratic movement in our country, this anti-Congress hatred of the people could well be channelised to militant mass movement under the leadership of left and democratic front, headed by the real working class party, following a correct base political line for our country.

It is also true that the given nature of the anti-Congress hatred of the masses, at the present stage of democratic movement makes it extremely prone to being misled and channelised into constitutional reformist movement under the leadership of bourgeois, petty-bourgeois and social democratic parties.

The bourgeoisie noted this carefully. It could read the grave danger of this people's hatred against the party in power being channelised to militant mass movements under the leadership of the left and democratic parties and forces headed by the vanguard of the proletariat, endangering the very capitalist exploitative system in the country.

Therefore, in order to channelise this anti-Congress hatred and sentiment of the people in favour of a new alternative of their own class, which, contrary to the interest of the masses, in reality will stand in defence of capitalism, the majority of the monopolists in our country did not lose time to shift

their support from the Congress Party to a new party—the Janata Party that appeared on the scene within forty eight hours after the poll announcement, which so long proved abortive despite serious attempts by Sri Jayprakash Narayan—with the merger of three rightist parties, the Congress (O), Jana Sangh, BLD and the SP, along with some expelled Congressmen. The all-out support of major section of the monopolists with money bags and the wide and almost exclusive publicity given in favour of the Janata Party by the monopoly press which later on took the concrete shape of its all-out support in favour of the Janata-CFD-CPI(M) combine, clearly reveal this fact.

The class motive of the monopolists was very clear. This new alternative, "will make serious efforts to more and more squeeze the scope of legitimate democratic movements of the people by arresting them within the bounds of parliamentary politics" as stated in the statement of our Central Committee. This could take place because of the absence of a left and democratic front which could not materialise due to the typical opportunist politics of the CPI and the CPI(M), both of which aligned themselves with the two major parties—the Congress and the Janata Party respectively.

This incident has once more proved that whatever the label, the sole objective of the anti-Congressism which the CPI(M) preaches, is to utilise the anti-Congress sentiment of the people to grab more seats and power to maintain the *status quo* of the existing capitalist system and this is also the sole objective of the anti-Congress bourgeois opposition parties including the rightist parties. We cannot but recall in this connection what our beloved leader, teacher and guide, Comrade Shibdas

Ghosh said long ago while discussing the nature of anti-Congressism of different opposition parties in our country. Comrade Ghosh pointed out: "...in our country, the anti-Congressism of those who are not anti-capitalist or in other words those who do not stand for any programme for anti-capitalist socialist revolution, even if they speak of Marxism-Leninism, do not differ basically from the anti-Congressism of the Jana Sangh, Swatantra Party, Congress(O), SSP, Pragati Party or other bourgeois parties."

[Speech delivered on 24th April, 1974.]

Does not the poll experiences vindicate this truth once more? Although Emergency has been withdrawn, certain democratic rights, taken away at the time of Emergency, have been to some extent restored, victimised railway employees are going to be reinstated (although their demands are not yet fulfilled), the threat of autocratic laws and bureaucratic defenders of law and order, the coercive machine of capitalism and problems before the democratic movements and working class struggles are not yet over, rather even now they continue to exist.

Comrade Shibdas Ghosh taught us that today, i.e. in the era of imperialism and moribund capitalism, the bourgeoisie are more attached to militarism and bureaucracy and less attached to democracy and liberty, however much they may clamour about liberalism and democracy. As a result, attacks on the democratic movements will time and again come, people will have to time and again fight for the achievement and extension of democratic rights. So the limited rights that have been restored, have been restored in the interest of the bourgeois class itself. They restored the democratic rights and civil liberties to that extent as needed to

establish and operate the mechanism of two party democracy and to refurbish the image of bourgeois democracy in order to distract the attention of the people from revolutionary thought and militant mass movements.

Before we take up the next point, we cannot but recall that it was only our Party, the SUCI, which brought forward these fundamental questions during the last election campaign—both about the necessity of a change as well as about its limitations. As the vanguard of the proletariat, we did not forget for a moment that for us and the toiling people, election is also a serious political battle. This demands of us to make people politically conscious. This also distinguishes our Party from all other parties—right or left—whose only business in the last election was to fan up the deep-rooted yearning of the people to anyhow bring about a change, in their bid to grab a few more seats or power, if at all possible—an act which only the parliamentary parties can afford to do. In fact, people had no concrete idea as to how they could fulfil their aspiration and protect their interest through this change, and these political parties not only avoided but also deliberately suppressed all such discussions on fundamentals during the elections.

Two-Party Democracy

People were tremendously anti-Congress and determined to defeat Congress. But as their anti-Congressism was not based on anti-capitalism or genuine leftism and class consciousness, a popular thinking has been carefully fostered by the bourgeoisie among them that all anti-Congress parties, irrespective of their class character, should merge into one to ensure the defeat of the Congress at the polls. They failed

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Anti-Congressism must take concrete shape of anti-capitalist struggle for people's emancipation

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to realise that the defeat of the Congress is not the defeat of capitalism—the root cause of all problems or miseries of life and that anti-Congressism is not necessarily leftism and revolutionary in character. That section of the common people which being thoroughly disgusted with the protracted misrule of the Congress, was for a change, failed to realise the danger which two-party democracy poses for democratic movement and class struggle. The bourgeoisie was clever enough to exploit and utilise this sentiment of the people fully by replacing one bourgeois party by another and initiating the process of two-party democracy on our soil.

It is worth recalling here that in our last Election Manifesto, and before that on innumerable occasions in the past, our party brought to the people one of the teachings of our great departed leader and teacher Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, which is of singular importance even at this juncture as it was before. Long before, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh reminded us of the important lesson of history that in the third phase of intense general crisis of world capitalism, the bourgeois class generally feels the political compulsion of backing up one or two parliamentary parties as alternative to the one placed in power, when the bourgeois party in power stands thoroughly discredited and people's wrath is directed with increasing vehemence against it. The bourgeoisie at once puts up an alternative before the people, with a view to keeping control over the governmental power on the one hand and to stave off the growth of a party of the proletariat and hence the possibility of militant mass movements under its leadership.

The bourgeoisie in our country is now endeavouring to develop the mechanism of "two-party democracy". It is but

natural that from this the class design the Indian bourgeoisie will make serious efforts in this direction so that two-party system really sustains and takes firm roots. The leaders of both the Janata Party and the Congress have openly advocated for the establishment of two-party democratic system in our country.

It cannot escape the notice of any intelligent observer that the whole political atmosphere which was surcharged with sharp contention and verbal fireworks between the contending bourgeois parliamentary parties during the election, is now more or less yielding place to a tone of reconciliation and revival of cordiality and co-operation. Bourgeois protocol in parliamentary politics is coming back. The new government has allowed the radio to broadcast the speech of Sri Chavan, leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party, which harped on the need of "national reconciliation". The new government, before introducing all the bills and measures in the parliament has been in constant dialogue with the Congress Party and its parliamentary leader. All the measures, be it the 43rd Amendment or previous to that, removal of "Prevention of Publication of Objectionable Matters Act" etc. have come in the Parliament after mutual consultations and discussions between leaders of the two major bourgeois parties or combinations. The leaders of all these parties and groups are also frequently meeting for what is now called a "constructive co-operation".

In the light of all these facts, the real intention of the new bourgeois combination in power should not be in doubt. After assumption of governmental power, it is taking those measures which can bring back that much *status quo* which in no way disturbs bourgeois exploitation but where the free-play

between the two contending bourgeois parties, according to the rule of the bourgeois parliamentary game, can be at work. It is exactly this vital precondition for a bourgeois parliamentary system that was at stake by the steps and measures adopted by the Congress Party, during the past years.

It should not be however missed that the *status quo* prevalent before the Emergency was not pro-people but rather anti-people, pro-capitalist.

Not only that, people are yet to see how far the new combination at the centre is willing to go back to the old *status quo* as regards restoration of bourgeois rights and also how far they can retain those in future in face of the tremendous crisis, and the associated mounting upsurge of the people which Indian capitalism is sure to generate. So, revival of democratic system and atmosphere means for the bourgeois parties and forces, restoration of the very rule of bourgeois parliamentary game by which one bourgeois party in government can be replaced by the other both serving the aggregate interests of the ruling bourgeois class as against the class aspiration and goal of the proletariat. Both the major bourgeois parties and combination are in full agreement as to this basic class objective. They co-operate with each other to defend capitalism which is crisis-ridden and chaos-discredited today, against the militant mass movement and struggles of the oppressed people for a total replacement of the very exploitative capitalist productive system. Toiling people must be alert about this class design of the bourgeoisie which is being put to action by both the major bourgeois parties and combination.

People will have to realise the basic difference between the demand for restoration of fundamental and democratic rights and

civil liberties as was raised by the bourgeois parties and that of a real working class party. In a bourgeois set up, the proletariat fights for the restoration, preservation and extension of civil liberty and democratic rights with the sole aim to open the scope of widest and freest possible legitimate democratic movement to intensify the class struggle to prepare, educate and organise the exploited masses politically and organisationally for future revolutionary battle by exhausting the present phase of democratic movement.

That is why our party not only demanded restoration, and preservation of democratic rights but further extension as well, which at the present stage of democratic movement will open up a new vista for the development and extension of democratic mass movement leading to people's struggle for emancipation from the bondage of capital and establishment of proletarian democracy.

With this end in view, our Party has demanded of the new government among others, acceptance of the principle that "Police must not interfere in the legitimate democratic movement" as also restoration of, administrative neutrality, to which the Government has not yet responded. It is worthwhile to note that only our party, under the guidance of our great departed leader Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, for the first time in our country, made this the guiding principle of the UF Government in West Bengal in 1967 and was implemented by our representative in the ministry.

So, it is obvious that the demand raised by the bourgeois parties and that by the party of the proletariat are not one and the same. The very intent and purpose, the very class objective and outlook are qualitatively different. The

aim of the bourgeoisie is to arrest the exploited people in bourgeois parliamentary politics. The proletariat and the toiling people have for them as class goal and objective—the overthrow of the very capitalist exploitative productive system which is the source of all their miseries.

The major bourgeois parties agree to see that the militant mass movements of the toiling people, capable of giving rise to alternate political power of the people does not grow. For, this alone can spell danger to the bourgeois rule. This, in essence, is the particular political design of the bourgeoisie behind its slogan of two party democracy which the toiling people must never miss to take serious note of.

It should be kept in mind that the increasing urge among the bourgeoisie of our country for two-party democratic system is inseparably linked up with the development and consolidation of monopoly capital. It is a historical truth that with the passing of the stage of competitive capital and the growth of monopoly capital, polarisation occurs in every sphere of socio-economic-political life. Multi-party parliamentary system of the stage of competitive capital offering wider democracy yields place to authoritarian system like one party rule, two party system and other forms in the phase of monopoly capitalism only at the peril of wider democracy itself, the presence of which could be well utilised by the party of the proletariat. We all know that it is in the interest of revolutionary mass movements which can better flourish in an atmosphere of wider democracy that the party of the proletariat always stands for more and more democratic rights and always opposes any attempt to curb the democratic rights of the people.

Our great departed leader and teacher

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Comrade Shibdas Ghosh has shown that the real class objective of monopoly capital to develop two-party system, in the present acute third phase of crisis of world capitalism, is to maintain the facade of democracy behind which also the process of fascisation can go unabated taking full advantage of the prevalent misconception even in the Marxist circles that fascism denotes only one party rule.

In the Indian context, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh has also shown that Indian monopoly has, for long, earnestly been striving to take recourse to this device although certain factors are there that stand in the way. These factors include, among other things, the existence of small and medium capital to a considerable extent in the economy and its impact in the form of regional mental complex in the body politic of our country. These factors generally impede the process of total polarisation, and consequent centralisation in every sphere of socio-economic-political life. Moreover, the type of two-party democracy practised in some countries of the West is not possible in our country as we do not have, among others, the tradition of bourgeois democratic norms and values of the era of Industrial Revolution. Consequently, possibility of reverting to one party rule cannot be ruled out unless the working class, in the mean time, is able to gather strength and establish leadership over the masses.

Why the United Left-Democratic Front Could Not Come Into Being

Now the pertinent question that arises is, how the bourgeoisie in the last election was able to carry this tremendous anti-Indira Congress feeling of the common people towards their nefarious conspiracy of establishing "two-party democracy" in India? In our considered opinion, if the left and democratic forces forged

Two-party democracy—a conspiracy of the bourgeoisie to perpetuate exploitation

broadest possible unity with the Janata Party on the basis of clear political perspective and sound principle and thus arrested the Janata Party politically by public commitments even in the situation that existed before the election, then it would not have been possible for the bourgeoisie to make their conspiracy successful so easily.

But strangely enough, while the bourgeoisie could overnight combine four parties into a single party and seize the opportunity to lead the anti-Congress mind of the people in their favour, with one symbol, one flag, one manifesto—the CPI(M), the biggest left party, miserably failed to unite all the left and democratic forces. They, unequivocally declared that this time they were not contesting the election uniting all the left and democratic parties with a common programme.

Not only that, while after the announcement of the poll the different parties, which together constituted the Janata Party, met Sm. Indira Gandhi unitedly on the question of release of political prisoners, the CPI(M) did not make any united move on this issue even with the six-party combination existing in West Bengal. Rather they met Sm. Indira Gandhi separately and started preliminary talks with Janata Party for election purposes.

As a result, while the Janata Party could show a united face before the people and thereby was able to capture the imagination as a viable alternative to Indira Congress, the left camp, because of such opportunist behaviour of the CPI(M), appeared as a disintegrated force before the people. And that is one of the reasons why the bourgeoisie was so easily successful in their conspiracy.

In our consideration, the situation would have been quite different and

the left and democratic parties could have captured the imagination of the people, had all the left parties approached the election with that much of initiative necessary to take command of a situation and moved for a broadest possible unity of all the anti-Congress parties, including the Janata Party on the basis of a common minimum programme, on the question of restoration of democratic rights. But the big left parties failing to correctly read the implications of the prevailing condition, took no initiative on this line. Rather the CPI(M), and its allies went whole hog for only an electoral adjustment of seats with the Janata Party.

At this critical juncture, our party approached all the anti-Congress Parties, who stood for the restoration, preservation and extension of civil liberties and democratic rights along with all the left parties with a proposal to form a 'broadest possible unity' on the basis of certain principles. Our objective was to bind the parties of the 'unity' to certain principles, for which they would fight. Our second objective was to develop a left 'core' with all the left parties within the broadest possible unity having the potentiality to emerge in course of struggle, as a left and democratic front. Our proposal was:

"The recent situation marked by such unprecedented negation of civil liberties and democratic rights of the common people by the imposition of spate of restrictive measures and by various other means, calls for, in the interest of the people, the broadest possible unity of all those forces who truly and firmly stand committed to restore, defend and extend these rights with a view to creating a congenial democratic atmosphere in the country.

"In order to present such a united face of all such opposition parties and forces to meet the attacks on the democratic rights, values and the people by the ruling party it is incumbent, not only to have an adjustment of seats for defeating the ruling Congress at the Poll but in order to make this defeat purposeful, to adopt also such programme which would ensure restoration and preservation of civil liberties and democratic rights of the people.

"This necessitated immediate sitting of all such opposition parties and adoption of such programme and also criteria on the question of allotment of seats that can genuinely reflect the present organisational strength of different parties necessary to ensure defeat of the ruling Congress and also selecting such candidates who are genuinely honest, sincere and dependable defenders of civil liberties and democratic rights of the people upholding a high standard of democratic values and norms."

But to our surprise, the CPI(M) refused point-blank even to form an alliance with our party, let alone considering the merits or demerits of our proposal. The following quotes reveal their attitude:

A spokesman of the CPI(M), in a comment about SUCI said, "on behalf of that Party (SUCI) a letter had been sent to them (CPI-M). SUCI proposes—all the forces should move unitedly in the election. But their past experience about this party is bitter. They are not eager to take SUCI along. That's why no reply to their letter was sent."

Ananda Bazar Patrika, 2.2.77.

While talking to the reporter of the Jugantar, a Bengali daily, on 4.2.77, CPI(M) leader Jyoti Basu was reported to have said, "Representatives from the

Party (SUCI) came to our Party office this evening. They want electoral alliance. But they are not within the left front. So, the question of alliance with them does not arise at all."

Thus the CPI(M), by their action, not only obstructed the formation of the broadest possible unity, they foiled the attempt to unite all the left parties to develop as a core, thereby frustrating the possible emergence of a left and democratic front, with the potentiality to become an alternative in Indian body politic. Preferring electoral adjustment with Janata-CFD combine, that also in a few states, the CPI(M) thus virtually handed over the position of an alternative to the Janata-CFD combine.

May we therefore ask, has the pragmatic politics pursued by them given them any dividend? Has not the representation from the left been weakened within the Parliament conceding virtual supremacy of the bourgeois parties and groups there?

In their eagerness to have only an electoral adjustment with Janata Party, the CPI(M) made a somersault in their political stand. As soon as its leadership realised that the Janata Party, has the potentiality of appearing as an alternative to the Congress, it at once threw over-board all its previous formulations, readings and observations with the sole objective of fetching better prospect at the poll. Earlier they said, "The CPI(M) has never subscribed and does not subscribe today to the formation of a single party by the amalgamation of disparate parties, groups, elements differing in policies, programme and outlook, in order to confront the ruling Congress. It is neither principled nor will it be enduring. Such a party cannot provide the alternative needed by the people. At best it is an election manoeuvre

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declaration of Lok Sabha Polls, with the three rightist parties like the Cong. (O), Jan Sangh, BLD and the SP along with some expelled Congressmen and favoured with an all-out support and patronage of the money bags of a great section of the monopolists as also of the trade and commerce, regional capital and rural bourgeoisie and the wide and almost exclusive publicity given to it in the monopoly press which during election worked in favour of the Janata-CFD-CPI(M) combine.

The Central Committee SUCI cannot but note that the wrath, anger and hatred of the people against the Indira Gandhi-led Congress pushed them to support this Janata-CFD combine. This could happen because of the absence of a left and democratic alternative of the toiling masses due to the most opportunist politics of CPI and CPI(M) aligning themselves with the ruling Congress and Cong. (O) respectively.

"The Central Committee notes that after a prolonged endeavour when for the first time the ruling bourgeoisie has been able to give birth to a 'two-party democracy', it will now make serious efforts to more and more squeeze the scope of legitimate democratic movements of the people by arresting them within the bounds of parliamentary politics or at best allow restricted form and nature of mass movements which will be conducive only to the parliamentary political objectives and will take resort to diverse forms of fascism by maintaining, as far as possible, the facade of parliamentary democracy, even if under the garb of 'two-party democracy'."

"The Central Committee notes with great reverence that it was only our beloved great departed leader, teacher, guide, the founder General Secretary of SUCI and an outstanding Marxist philosopher and thinker of the

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age Comrade Shibdas Ghosh who long ago predicted the possibility and significance of the emergence of "two-party democracy" in our country with all its anti-people aspects and gave a brilliant theoretical exposition.

"The Central Committee cannot but note that there has been a widespread charge of large scale rigging in the last election made from different responsible political parties and quarters. This includes, as alleged, not only forcible occupation of booths and large-scale forcible stamping of ballot papers in support of this or that party but also top level manipulation of election results by various means throughout the country with the involvement of persons in the higher echelons of administration. The Central Committee also notes with all seriousness that not only different political parties, even many Returning Officers officially admitted the existence of duplicate ballot papers in huge numbers and their distribution to different constituencies. Under the circumstances, the Central Committee is sure that it is voicing the sentiment of the common people when it demands a thorough, high-power, impartial public enquiry into the charges of rigging by various means and also to unearth the dangerous role played by the money bags of the monopoly houses in the last election. Unless the whole truth is revealed and the culprits brought to book, it will be the big monopoly house and administration combine and not the popular vote which will determine, as in the past, particularly in 1971 and '72, the verdict of all future elections—thereby reducing election to a complete farce.

"The performance of our Party at the last Lok Sabha polls should also be viewed in this light. The Central Committee noted

that after our serious attempt to forge broadest possible unity of all left and opposition parties in the last election on the basis of certain clear political perspective and sound principle met with failure in all the states due to non-cooperation of others and after in its stead the unprincipled alliance took shape, that too only in a few states, between the Janata Party, CFD and the CPI(M) and its allies—the militant pro-left section of the masses clearly found that it was only the SUCI which held aloft the banner of leftism and Red flag—the two other parties, i.e. the CPI and the CPI(M) joining hands with Congress (R) and Congress (O) respectively. It was this unmistakable feeling and realisation of the pro-left section of the masses that made them come forward with active support, co-operation and help and rally round this historic struggle conducted by our party against the Congress-CPI alliance on the one hand and the Janata-CFD-CPI(M) combine on the other during the last election. The Central Committee extends its heartfelt revolutionary greetings to all those who came forward to support our stand realising the correctness of the base political line of the toiling people in general and the proletariat in particular as provided by our party.

"Giving a note of caution to the people the Central Committee points out that although Congress has been dislodged from the power at the centre in the last election, not only capitalism continues to exist which has already given birth to monopoly and finance Capital in our country but it exists with economic and political centralisation and cultural regimentation which form the rock-bottom foundation of fascism.

"The Central Committee also reiterates that Indian capitalism has already

assumed imperialist characteristics which will remain unaltered despite this change.

"The Central Committee points out that because of their basic social democratic character both the CPI and the CPI(M) all through played a typically compromising role. While the CPI has been very much isolated from the people obviously due to its pro-Congress role played for a long time—the opportunistic role played by the CPI(M) is no less dangerous. When Sm. Indira Gandhi was in power, the CPI(M) not only supported numbers of economic and foreign policies of the Government as 'radical' and 'progressive' and thereby objectively strengthened the hands of Sm. Gandhi and her government under this or that pretext but also supported the essential contention of the political line pursued by her government during the Emergency including her twenty-point programme while mouthing at the same time slogans for the revocation of the Emergency and maintaining an anti-Indira stance before the masses in its bid to keep its image as a left party. Similarly, the parties like Jan Sangh, Congress (O) etc. constituting the Janata Party today which were branded by the CPI(M) as 'right reactionary parties' forming the 'main danger' before the people, just the other day, is now termed as 'less dangerous' by the same very party with the shift of support of a substantial section of the bourgeoisie to the newly formed Janata Party now saddled in power at the centre.

"The Central Committee urges upon the Central Government to fulfil all its commitments to the people and immediately scrap all pro-capitalist, anti-people, anti-democratic Acts and measures adopted during the Emergency, if it takes sometime

to annul such other measures taken during the thirty years of Congress rule.

"The Central Committee demands immediate dissolution of all State legislatures whose life has been extended undemocratically including the West Bengal State Assembly, formed through all-out rigging in 1972 and fresh poll in all such States.

"The Central Committee condemns the dangerous politics of defection as a gamble and an out and out unprincipled and heinous act. While every individual has the right to decide which class or party politics he will accept as the motto of his life, but it has nothing to do with defection which puts to question the integrity of that individual. The plea of defection from Congress to any other party, as a 'new political alignment' is, in the opinion of the Central Committee, no less opportunistic and hence should be totally rejected by the people.

"The Central Committee urges upon the Central Government to immediately introduce the policy of 'non-interference of police in the legitimate democratic mass movements' as well as to maintain strict 'administrative neutrality' and to take effective measures to implement it in all states and the Union territories.

"The Central Committee urges upon the people to immediately organise themselves in the 'People's Committees' from village and mahalla levels on the basis of democratic norms, values and proletarian culture with a view to developing their own instruments of struggles to keep constant vigil on the activities of the legislators on the one hand and to restore and protect their rights, interests and cause and to consolidate, extend and develop democratic movements of the people in conformity with the correct base political line of the anti-capitalist socialist revolution of our country on the other.

"To fulfil the historic tasks of the present junc-

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that would bring no good to the people." [Peoples' Democracy Nov. 7, 1976]

And when they decided to make electoral adjustments with the Janata Party they started characterising the Janata Party as "less dangerous" (Sri Sundaraya — Hindusthan Standard 7.2.77) and "more radical than the Congress" (Sri P. Rammurthy—Times of India 7.3.77) and "The manifestoes of the Janata Party and the CFD reflect a strong pro-left feeling of the people (Sri Ranadive—Ananda Bazar Patrika, 1.3.77).

Was such eulogy of the Janata Party at all necessary?

True, the main question before the people at the poll which was called without revoking the Emergency was undoubtedly the question of restoration, preservation and further extension of fundamental rights and civil liberties. And here, the Janata Party had also a role.

Because of this, the Janata Party was accepted as a constituent of the "broadest possible unity" in the People's Union for Civil Liberties and Democratic Rights during the Emergency. But does it mean that its image should be bolstered up, even at the cost of the image of the left?

The CPI(M) not only foiled this time the possibility of uniting the left and democratic forces and thereby helped the Janata Party to capture people's imagination as an alternative to Indira Congress to the detriment of people's movement but their entire history of the past will bear the same story.

In 1969 a left and democratic government was installed in West Bengal with a vast majority. If that unity could be maintained then the picture of Indian politics today would have been entirely different. But the CPI(M), following a sectarian line with the sole object of monopolising governmental power, started inter-party

The danger of Fascism remains as before in the 'two-party' system

clashes, brought extreme disunity amongst the left and democratic parties and forces, resulting ultimately in the fall of the United Front Government. To cover up their sectarian politics they evolved at that time the queer theory of "class-based front" and negated entirely, the necessity of united front of left and democratic parties.

Our party, till the very last moment, earnestly tried to keep the unity of the left and democratic forces intact and approached all the parties including the CPI(M) with some concrete proposals. But the CPI(M), by rejecting our proposal outright, frustrated all our attempts for restoring the unity.

Again, in 1971, though the left and democratic parties in West Bengal fought the election, dividing themselves into two fronts, the opportunity of forming an anti-Congress Government appeared in West Bengal. For that, just after the election was over, our party called for a coalition government of ULF & ULDF. But the CPI(M), without responding to our call, frantically tried to form a government, even encouraging defection from other parties, following the same sectarian policy. They not only failed in their attempt but rather helped objectively the Congress to stage a comeback. Exploiting the situation, the Congress formed a coalition government with the support of CPI and Forward Bloc.

Even after the rigged election of 1972 in West Bengal, when people were groaning under Congress misrule, our party, time and again, tried to develop a people's movement forging a united front of left and democratic parties on the basis of a minimum common programme. But the CPI(M) not only refused to respond to our call by calling such proposal 'unrealistic', but frustrated it with their fanciful

theory of 'issue based front' and foiled all our attempts to develop people's movement. The rightist parties took the opportunity successfully and captured the anti-Indira Congress image when people started movement in Gujrat and Bihar. We approached CPI(M), even then, to take part in the Bihar movement forming a united front of the left and democratic parties there. But they rejected our proposal on the plea of rightist parties' association with the movement. But in West Bengal, the same party went, not for a movement but for a one-day's convention, with Mr. P. C. Sen of Congress (O), breaking the unity of the combination of nine left and democratic parties. The nine-party combination was then working out a programme for people's movement under its leadership. Our party differed with CPI(M) on this stand and made some criticism. CPI(M) then demanded of us, surrender of the right to criticism which no party with self respect, let alone a revolutionary party, could agree to. After that they created a situation of not calling our party at the subsequent meetings of the combination.

After the Emergency was proclaimed, when the situation completely changed, our party was for a broadest possible unity of all the parties and forces which wanted to fight for the restoration and preservation of democratic rights and civil liberties. At a meeting on 28th June, Calcutta, the CPI(M) did not commit itself on this proposal.

From all this, it is evident which party moved again and again for the unity of left and democratic forces and which party foiled these attempts by its consistent anti-unity stand.

How free and fair was the Poll?

Everybody will agree that the tremendous anti-

Congress sentiment of the people, accumulated during the last thirty years of uninterrupted Congress misrule in the country, burst forth in the last Lok-Sabha poll routing the ruling Congress from power.

There is no denying the fact that in the absence of an alternative in the political arena—whether in the form of a united left and democratic front or a "Broadest possible Unity" of all left and opposition parties, with leftist parties functioning as a 'core' within it—the Janata Party could project itself as an alternative to the Congress with the support of the press barons, and successfully reaped a rich harvest of anti-Congress feelings of the people who were earnestly desiring a change though not knowing its real significance.

But with the passing of the first flush of jubilation at the Janata-CFD victory, when people from different walks of life could calmly concentrate on the final picture of the poll results, certain amount of uneasiness started creeping into their minds. Discerning people could notice unmistakable symptoms and evidences of startling anomalies. Murmurs started all around. Certain questions, serious allegations and counter allegations were coming up to make it doubtful whether this election could at all be called free and fair. They are still causing serious concern to all those who uphold the lofty ideals of democratic values, norms and traditions. Apart from the doubt raised in the mind of well-meaning people even the major contending parties i.e. Janata-CFD-CPI(M) combine and Congress-CPI alliance charged each other of taking resort to rigging, not to speak of false voting and booth capturing on a massive scale. They just confirm

the doubts already created. The Janata party has already set up an enquiry commission on the alleged rigging in Andhra. The CPI(M) too, has demanded enquiry in Kerala and in those seats where they were defeated in West Bengal. Mrs. Gandhi also made an oblique reference in her press interview, pointing out unfairness in election for which certainly she cannot be absolved of her responsibility.

The significant point to note here is that in West Bengal, while the CPI(M) and other opposition parties (Janata-CFD) alleged a huge preparation for large scale rigging before the poll—the ruling Congress denied the charge as baseless. But after the poll, the ruling Congress has now taken the floor to raise the same charge of rigging while the Janata—CPM—CFD combination is keeping mum apart from demanding enquiry in those seats only where they have been defeated. Similarly, it is also known to all of us that when the CPI(M) was expressing apprehension over large scale rigging in West Bengal before the poll, the CPI accused that it was nothing but a plea for the CPI(M) which was isolated from the masses and hence was apprehensive of its debacle. Now that the result has come out otherwise, the victorious parties have congratulated the Election Commission for 'free and fair election' while the CPI, a partner of the defeated Congress, is demanding a thorough probe into the charge of rigging.

Thus, it is evident from the above facts that the question of rigging has become a common issue to all the political parties.

To ascertain truth, we have to take recourse to the logic of probability, inference and material evidences.

A question now arises—what was the calculation of Sm. Indira Gandhi? Was not she aware of the angry mood of the people that could adversely affect

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the poll prospect of her party? Did not the intelligence department tell her about the possible danger for the ruling party in the event of a free and fair election? Then, are we to believe that Sm. Gandhi took such an attitude that if people did not vote her party to power she would quite gladly and silently bow out showing respect to popular verdict and the tradition of democracy—which she is telling now? Even an impartial observer would not agree with such a proposal. Then do we not have only one probability, that Sm. Gandhi decided to go to polls only on the strength of elaborate arrangement of large-scale rigging? This rigging does not necessarily mean only forcible occupation of booths by the hoodlums and forcible stamping of ballots in favour of this party or that party. This also suggests large-scale involvement of the persons in the higher echelons of administration to manipulate the results which, we all know, took place particularly in the West Bengal Assembly election in 1972. Whether her rigging machinery favoured her this time fully or acted as a boomerang causing defeat to her party in a vast part of the country, is altogether a different point.

Secondly, an inference can also be drawn from a "mysterious" phenomenon. Poll results of Northern India and Southern India reflect a contrasting picture to the bewilderment of the common people. In Northern India, Congress has been completely routed. Contrary to this the Janata-CFD combine which has been victorious in North India, has met with a serious debacle in South India. Many political leaders and journalists are engaged in their vein attempt to unveil this "mystery". People of the South along with the rest of the country shared the sufferings of the Congress misrule including the onslaughts that were meted out during the Emergency period. The point, that since family planning had not been

SUCI, the party of the Indian Proletariat alone holds aloft the banner of leftism and proletarian politics

introduced in South forcibly and so it justifies the sweeping Congress victory there—cannot be taken as a convincing argument. Because there is experience to the contrary in some states including West Bengal. Here, also Congress has been routed although people did not experience so much the rigours of family planning. There is another point. At a time when Congress used to score massive victory in the Southern States, even then the opposition parties were able to win a good number of seats. But this time when a tremendous anti-Congress current swept over the country how is it that the Janata - CPD-CPI(M) combine fared so badly? The only plausible explanation may be that in South India the regional bourgeoisie had always been apprehensive regarding the domination of the monopolists of North India. This had been reflected in the past in economic, political and particularly in linguistic strifes and conflicts. They considered Janata combination backed by a major section of Northern monopolists, as a threat from the North and therefore decided to keep Sm. Gandhi in power and accordingly the bureaucracy in the South completely sided with the Congress. Mrs. Lakshmi Kanthama, a prominent Janata Party leader, said that in spite of Janata wave in the South, her party was defeated due to some "mysterious reasons" (Amrita Bazar Patrika, 3.4.77) by which she hinted at rigging only. So is it not evident that the rigging machinery arranged by Sm. Gandhi went in her favour in the South blessed by the Southern bourgeoisie but did not work, rather went against in the North due to the unfavourable attitude taken against her by the major section of the Northern Indian monopolists?

Thirdly, on the eve of polls, lakhs of duplicate

ballot papers were discovered, certainly more were left undetected. The fact of printing and distribution of huge number of duplicate ballot papers has been admitted by numbers of Returning officers and this point got such an importance that only three days before the poll the Janata - CFD - CPI(M) combine demanded in a hurriedly summoned Press Conference in Calcutta, postponement of election in West Bengal for a few days only for making alternative arrangement of printing of fresh ballot papers. Although how these duplicate ballot papers were ultimately used is no more pressed upon by them today, after the counting is over.

Lastly, from the limited experience of our party, particularly in West Bengal, we are more than confirmed that large-scale rigging took place in the last election. Detection of duplicate ballot boxes from a godown in a particular constituency, ballot boxes with lower lids broken and tied with ropes, huge discrepancy between the actual ballot papers found in some boxes during counting with the number recorded in the ballot papers account attested by the Presiding officers (Form 16), existence of bunch of ballot papers in folded condition, large number of unstamped ballots—a fact hitherto not experienced in previous election—marking of ballots with booth stamps as against the specific stamp meant for the purpose, ballots without the signature of the Presiding officers or with initials as against their full signature, discrepancy between the signatures of Form 16 and those used in ballot papers, huge ballots having mark of ink at the back that indicates organised stamping of ballot papers being arranged one above the other, unusually neat and clean stamping just at the centre of the symbols of the

victorious candidates even in rural constituencies—are only a few to mention about the gross irregularities which can never be explained without rigging taking place. Even the bourgeois dailies which backed either the Congress-CPI alliance or Janata-CFD-CPI(M) combine, against whom we had to fight alone, and blacked out our Party completely during the election, had to concede just on the eve of election that our Party would fare well in some of the seats in West Bengal and may even win in two or three seats. But the actual votes that were 'allotted' to us in these constituencies were not only completely different from these expectations, but the numbers of votes also took the voters who voted us in large numbers coming practically in organised demonstration and also our rival contestants by surprise.

So, it leaves nobody in doubt that widespread rigging had been resorted to throughout the country. And it is the bureaucracy that backed up the party or the candidate whom it wanted to be returned. There is every reason to apprehend that this bureaucracy will develop more and more sophisticated methods of rigging in future making their detection practically impossible. This spells a serious threat for democratic movement and carries within it the danger of administrative fascism as our beloved great departed leader and teacher Comrade Shibdas Ghosh cautioned immediately after the 1972 poll in West Bengal. In the interest of popular verdict to be properly reflected and more so in the interest of legitimate democratic mass movements, the Central Committee of our Party has demanded a high-power, thorough and impartial probe to bring truth to light and culprits

to book so that administrative neutrality can be ensured and rigging can be prevented once for all.

Our achievement

The performance of our Party at the last Lok Sabha polls should be viewed in this light. No doubt, we have lost in the election in so far as returning of candidates is concerned, but we have come out victorious in our political and organisational battle judged from the tremendous response and enthusiastic support we received from the people. The nature of this support in most of the states matched quite favourably if not far excelled the magnitude of support we got particularly in West Bengal when we had the advantage of popular swing in our favour as a partner of the UF in 1969. This is no mean achievement because this time it was a heroic fight against Congress-CPI alliance on the one hand and the Janata-CFD-CPI(M) combine on the other and more particularly when the bourgeois press media and Radio engaged themselves to completely black out our Party and create favourable ground for polarisation between these two combinations. The attempt of the bourgeois, petty bourgeois or social democratic parties to isolate the revolutionary party of the Indian proletariat has been, to their dismay, completely frustrated. Our Party has been able to create tremendous impact among the masses on the basis of the correct mass revolutionary line, expand the mass base even to the remotest villages covering vast areas, recruit party workers in huge number from the masses and last but not the least, drag a notable section of pro-left workers, supporters and sympathisers belonging to other left parties. People have witnessed that we are distinctly different from other political parties not only in our political stand

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UPHOLD THE BASE POLITICAL LINE OF THE PROLETARIAT BUILD UP POLITICAL POWER OF THE PEOPLE

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in the election, but also in our laying of emphasis on educating the people politically, in our style of work, dedication, sincerity and selflessness of the cadres, and above all, in the moral and ethical approach of our Party. All these combined together have created such an imprint in mass mind and enhanced the prestige of the party to such a height that others cannot but feel envious. This experience of the people came in sharp contrast to the behaviour of other left parties who felt least concern about politics, took recourse to slandering, canards, cheap stunt etc. in addition to squandering away of huge money lavishly spent during the election. This type of behaviour on their part has once again proved that these parties are nothing but typical social democratic parties.

But the heroic battle we conducted, remaining unflinching on the question of political perspective and sound principle, was possible only for a party made up of a different mettle—built up, nurtured, and guided by no less a person than Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the leader, teacher, guide, an eminent Marxist thinker of the era, founder General Secretary of our Party. Comrade Ghosh has taught us:

"So long the revolutionary situation has not matured, whether the people want election or not, welcome it or not—people are dragged into it, they get entangled in it. A revolutionary situation means, when the people have thoroughly realised the utter futility of the parliamentary system—that election will bring no good to the people; they are well-organised and organisedly they take the decision to reject it. They

reject, not from a negative approach but from a positive approach—they are all set for an uprising; when the cry is: "No election—seizure of power". Then and then only election is of no use.

"...when the proletariat, from revolutionary objective are left with no other alternative than to participate in the election battle to be with the masses they do so on the basis of a definite revolutionary base political line of the proletariat. They also try utmost to win as many seats as possible. But never the focal point of their objective can be any how to grab maximum seats. Their focal point is to educate the people to fight an election battle on the basis of the mass revolutionary line and following this if they can win maximum seats—so much the better! If they do not win maximum seats, even not a single seat—no matter.But the central focal point can never be to any how grab some seats".

The stand of our Party in the last election, the stiff political battle conducted by our Party against heavy odds and the tremendous support of the people we received on the basis of their firm realisation that it is only our Party, the SUCI the only hope before the Indian proletariat, has held aloft the banner of leftism and Red Flag in the whole of the country—show how brilliantly the Central Committee of our Party has guided us in this battle true to the lesson of that great Marxist genius Comrade Shibdas Ghosh.

An appeal to the people

Taking stock of the entire post-election political situation the central committee of our party in its resolution dated 6th April '77 has struck a note of caution to our

people by drawing their most urgent attention to the fact that "although congress has been dislodged from the power at the centre in the last election, not only capitalism continues to exist which has already given birth to monopoly in our country but it exists with economic and political centralisation and cultural regimentation which form the rock-bottom foundation of fascism."

Our party has also pointed out that "Indian capitalism has already assumed imperialist characteristics which will remain unaltered despite this change" in government.

So, the toiling people in our country will continue to remain as before, under the grinding wheel of exploitation of a capitalist productive system. Notwithstanding the very many promises of the new bourgeois government, not a single fundamental problem in their life can be solved so long capitalism remains. Solution to peoples' fundamental problems or for that matter, any radical transformation of the society depends wholly on the completion of the tasks of uninterrupted industrial revolution, modernisation and mechanisation of agriculture and through these, solution of the unemployment problem. But this historic task is inextricably linked up today with the task of anti-capitalist socialist revolution in our country.

Therefore, as a step forward to this historic task, united front of left and democratic parties and forces, at this stage of democratic movement is of historic necessity. The Central Committee of our Party, has appealed to all the left and democratic parties to be earnest on

fulfilling this historic urgency.

Our Party can not but feelingly express its warm greetings to the toiling people who stood by us in the gallant political battle that the party undertook on their behalf. They have helped us to build up people's committees at the village level as peoples' own instruments of struggle, true to the teachings of our great departed leader and teacher. They have correctly seen that it is our Party that alone stands today as the only left core in Indian politics and the future lies with this party. On us devolves the historic task

of organising the oppressed people politically, culturally and organisationally on the correct base political line of the proletariat. As revolutionaries, we remain with the masses to defend the Flag when all others have deserted the field. We bear a stupendous task no doubt. But the party of the Indian proletariat, SUCI was founded and trained by our great departed leader Comrade Shibdas Ghosh to carry this great task through. We cannot but be true to the cause.

Long live Revolution!
Long live the great
teachings of Comrade
Shibdas Ghosh!
Long live S.U.C.I.!

MASSIVE RALLY AT PATNA

(By a Staff Reporter)

A massive rally was organised on 18th April '77 by the Bihar State Committee of SUCI at Patna on the occasion of 29th Anniversary of the Party.

Ten thousand toiling people—agricultural and industrial workers, poor peasants, students, youths, women and people from different walks of life came in streaming processions from distant places defying scorching heat.

Comrade Sankar Singh, member of the C. C. and Bihar Secretary, of SUCI Presided. Comrades Amar Kumar Pande and N. R. Singh, both members of

the Bihar State Committee addressed the meeting.

At the meeting, Party Central Committee's review on the last parliamentary poll as also the post-election situation was explained. The meeting demanded interalia (i) immediate dissolution of the State Assembly which has no moral right to stay any more. It has long ceased to represent the people as it is kept on extra lease of life doctoring the Constitution. (ii) immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners including the workers organisers and leaders of our Party and the Naxalites.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE STATEMENT

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ture, the Central Committee calls upon all the left and democratic parties and forces to come forward and form United Left and Democratic Front on the basis of a concrete programme, principle and code of conduct.

"The Central Committee decides to highlight

among others the thirty point demands covering all section of the toiling people's acute and burning problems for mobilising public opinion and organising broad-based democratic mass movements for their implementation by the Government." [The charter of demands has been omitted for shortage of space.]

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